

## **Reconstruction**

During Reconstruction, political equality was supposedly restored when the vote was extended to all men regardless of color. However, when Reconstruction ended in North Carolina, the N. C. General Assembly established separate schools for whites and blacks. No schools were established for Indians.

## **Indian Schools**

In 1885, however, the N. C. General Assembly passed legislation which established separate schools for the Indians of Robeson County. In 1887, Croatan Normal School opened its doors to Indian students of Robeson County. Over the next 70 years other Indian communities in the state were successful in their aims to establish schools.

## **Indian Recognition**

Beginning in the late 1800s and continuing into the early 1970s, Indians in North Carolina re-established their formal tribal identities and sought recognition from the state and federal governments. In 1889, the federally recognized Eastern Band of the Cherokee was incorporated under North Carolina law. In 1910, the Lumbee were formally recognized by the State of North Carolina. The "Lumbee Bill," passed by the U.S. Congress in 1956, recognized the Lumbee as an Indian tribe but denied them access to services from the Bureau of Indian Affairs. In 1965, the Haliwa-Saponi received state recognition, as did the Coharie and Waccamaw-Siouan in 1971. In 1979, the N.C. Commission of Indian Affairs was authorized to establish procedures for state recognition of North Carolina Indian tribes and organizations. Under these procedures, state recognition was granted to the Meherrin Tribe of Hertford County in 1986 and the Triangle Native American Society in Wake County in 2000. The Indians of Person County gained recognition through the General Assembly in 1913.

## **More Progress**

Throughout the 1960s and 1970s the Indians of North Carolina continued to make progress despite still prevalent discrimination and many obstacles. Seven Indian organizations, chartered by the State of North Carolina during this time, currently provide a variety of services to Indian people in North Carolina. Pembroke State College for Indians, the first four-year institution for Indians in the nation, became a member of the University of North Carolina system and its name was changed to Pembroke State University. Also during this period, Indians became lawyers and doctors, gained seats on local boards, were hired or appointed to important federal and state positions, and were elected to the N. C. General Assembly.

## **Commission of Indian Affairs Formed**

In 1971, the N. C. Commission of Indian Affairs was established by the N. C. General Assembly to advocate for the rights of the state's Indian population, a population which in 1990 numbered over 80,000, was the largest Indian population east of the Mississippi River and the seventh largest in the nation.

## **A Look at the Future**

Despite the advances of the Indian people of North Carolina during the last 200 years, serious health, social, economic and educational problems still remain to be faced. These problems, however, have not caused the Indians of North Carolina to lose their confidence or hopes in the future. They have continued into the new millennium with their struggles for equality and recognition.